

Corn Belt Ports Growth Continues and Two Make Top 50 Principal U.S. Ports List

December 15, 2021 (Updated)



Corn Belt Ports

Tri-State Region (IL, MO & IA)

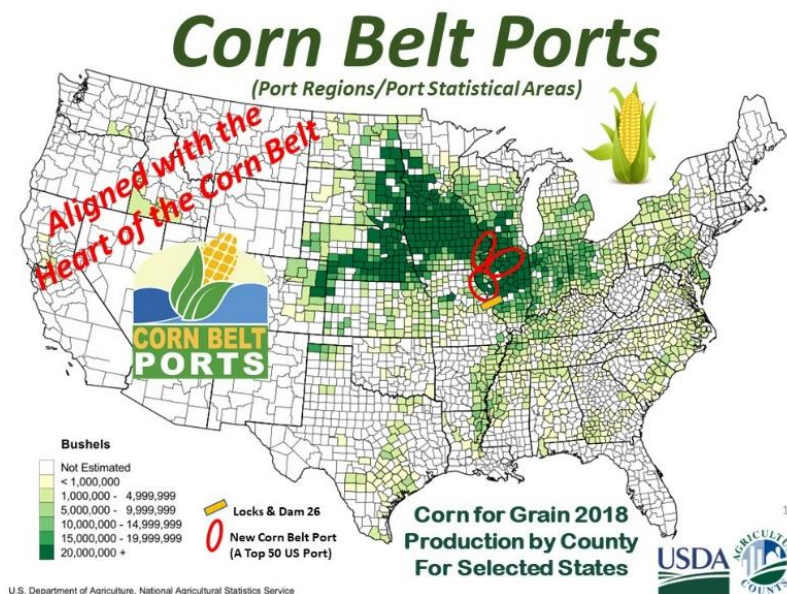
MEDIA RELEASE #5

The Tri-State Ports in the Heart of the Corn Belt above Locks and Dam 26 (map below) saw continued growth and advancement in their national ranking. The annual report (utilizing 2020 data) was released in November 2021 by the U.S. Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center that ranked waterborne tonnage for principal U.S. ports in all 50 states and U.S. territories. **This year the Corn Belt Ports together handled 38.3 million tons of freight making them the equivalent of the 17th largest port in the United States (similar in size to the port of Baltimore, MD), and the collective equivalent of the largest inland port in the nation.** This is a notable increase. Last year, the Corn Belt Ports for the first time in U.S. history were both listed and ranked on the annual Principal U.S. Ports List. Last year's report showed that the Corn Belt Ports collectively handled 31.1 million tons of freight, ranked as the equivalent of the 22nd largest port in the United States, and were the collective equivalent of the 4th largest inland port in the nation. **See next page for port specific details.**

The objective is for the Corn Belt Ports to routinely and individually be ranked as a Top 50 Principal U.S. Port, and a Top 10 Inland Port each year. And, collectively, they dependably handle enough tonnage to be the equivalent of the largest inland port in the nation. Additionally, the Corn Belt Ports team intends to ensure each of the Corn Belt Ports are featured on *Global Trade Magazine's "Top 50 Power Ports List"* which is released each fall. Next fall (2022) both the Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC) and the Illinois Waterway Ports will make this list, which will be based on 2020 data. MAPC (#44) made the 2021 Top 50 Power Ports List this year (2019 data): [POWER 'EM UP: LADIES AND GERMS, AMERICA'S TOP 50 POWER PORTS - Global Trade Magazine](https://publibrary.planusace.us/document/dd872733-1061-4881-a180-f6d0d5bb2bb6) .

More on the annual report issued by the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center can be found at:

<https://publibrary.planusace.us/document/dd872733-1061-4881-a180-f6d0d5bb2bb6>



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Corn Belt Ports Ranking Details:

- 1) **The Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC)** is defined by the confluence of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and is centered on the Quincy-Hannibal, IL-MO area. MAPC handled 15.0 million tons of domestic freight in 2020, and was ranked as the 41st largest port in the nation based on the freight tonnage handled. MAPC climbed from 44th Place to 41st place in the national ranking, and increased freight tonnage handled by 3 million tons over last years' report. MAPC is currently the 7th largest inland port in the Nation and larger than the Port of Galveston, TX. MAPC retains its position as the largest port on the Upper Mississippi River. A potential increase of an additional 1.5 million tons is anticipated next year with the planned addition of Greene and Calhoun Counties in Illinois to the MAPC Port Statistical Area.
- 2) **The Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports** are centered on the river cities of Peoria and Ottawa and includes ten counties within three regional planning agencies, and encompasses 175.5 river miles. The ILWW Ports include the Havana, Heart of Illinois, Illinois Valley, Ottawa, and Seneca Regional Port Districts. The ILWW Ports handled 14.9 million tons of domestic freight in 2020 and maintained its position as the 42nd largest port in the nation based on freight tonnage handled, plus saw an increase of over 800,000 tons over the previous year. The ILWW Ports is currently the 8th largest inland port in the nation and similar in size to the Port of Boston, MA. The entire Illinois Waterway (all 357 river miles from the confluence with the Mississippi River to Chicago's doorstep) handled 30.1 million tons of freight in 2020.
- 3) **The Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI)** is managed by a collaboration of five regional planning agencies, is centered on the Quad Cities, and includes riverfront counties north to the port city of Dubuque. MRPEIWI handled 5.0 million tons of domestic freight in 2019, and was ranked the 81st largest port in the nation based on the tonnage handled. MRPEIWI has recovered from the flooding in 2019 [[Impacts of 2019 UMR Flooding Barge Movements Fahie 1.pdf \(uscg.mil\)](#)] and in the report released this year MRPEIWI climbed 25 places and is now ranked as the 56th largest port and the 11th largest inland port in the nation, at 8.4 million tons of freight handled. MRPEIWI is the same size as the Port of Miami, FL. The MRPEIWI Port Statistical Area did fail to make the Top 50 List by 1 million tons this year. The state of Iowa handled 11.33 million tons of freight in 2020. And, the MRPEIWI Regional Planning Agency Collaboration handled over 12 million tons. So, additional adjustments to MRPEIWI are being considered to better align port boundaries with existing terminals in the bi-state area to support regional transportation planning and development efforts.

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Featured Quotes:

Heather Hampton+Knodle, President of **American Agri-Women** stated, “We need reliable, dependable and sustainable access to global markets for our agricultural exports. Rural areas do have nationally significant ports that are an essential part of the global supply chain. The ports and terminals serving the Corn Belt and other major agriculture regions in the U.S. are expected to see continued growth as we strive to both increase production to meet global market needs, and improve resiliency in our national transportation infrastructure systems.”

Marty Marr, President of the **Illinois Corn Growers Association** stated, “It is great news that the Corn Belt Ports together handled 38.3 million tons of freight in 2020 making them the equivalent of the largest inland port in the nation. We do expect increased investment in our waterways since we are an essential part of the national and global supply chains.” Brent Hoerr, a long-time **Farmer in Missouri**, and a Board Member of the Upper Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers Association remarked, “It is nice to see the steady growth in the use of our ports. The Mid-America Port Commission climbed from 44th place to 41st place in the national ranking, and increased freight tonnage handled by 3 million tons over the previous year. We do anticipate the slow, steady growth to continue.” Lance Lillibridge, President of the **Iowa Corn Growers Association** and farmer from Vinton, Iowa said, “Iowa is the top producer and exporter of corn in the nation, and it is no surprise to us that Iowa ports and terminals handled enough freight in 2020 to make our state [a top-ranked] inland port in the nation. It is encouraging to know that we are on the national scoreboard.” Mike Steenhoek, Executive Director of the **Soy Transportation Coalition** stated, “Our ports in the Midwest are a foundational part of our supply chain. Critical improvements to our locks and dams are long overdue and are needed to enable us to have access to global markets that we can depend on. The growth in tonnage on our waterways makes the needed investment in our infrastructure even more compelling.”

Molly Grover, President and CEO at the **Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce** stated, “The remarkable rebound the Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois made after the 2019 floods highlights the resiliency of our regional transportation infrastructure. Our regional port climbed 25 places after the flood, and is now ranked as the 56th largest port in the nation, a category that includes coastal ports. Our multi-modal port is key to maintaining business growth and supporting regional logistics operations.” Paul Rumler, President and CEO at **Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce** said, “The Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois (MRPEIWI) is now ranked the 11th largest inland port in the Nation. At 8.4 million tons of freight handled, MRPEIWI is the same size as the Port of Miami, FL. The multi-modal transportation and logistics infrastructure that underpins a regional port of this magnitude is one of the main reasons businesses in our area thrive.” Della Schmidt, President & CEO of the **Greater Burlington Partnership** remarked, “Being part of a Top 50 Port clearly makes us more competitive for a wide range of direct and indirect investment, and supports our regional marketing efforts. The nation can’t ignore a port of this size.”

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Kyle Moore, President of the **Great River Economic Development Foundation** highlighted that, “For a second year in a row the Mid-America Port Commission will be recognized as a Top 50 U.S. Power Port by *Global Trade Magazine*. This federal port designation is important for us. Being larger than the Port of Galveston, TX gives our port region numerous economic advantages.” Duane Calbow, Economic Development Planner for the **North Central Illinois Council of Governments** indicated, “The recent consolidation of the Illinois Waterway Ports and Terminals makes us more competitive at the national level, and gives us an important regional economic identity that we never had before. All indications are that the regional transportation importance of the Illinois Waterway will only continue to grow. Most people do not realize that we are larger than the Port of Boston, MA.” Nancy Norton, President & CEO of **Grundy County Economic Development** believes, “Our ports and terminals on the Illinois Waterway are a significant part of the national and global supply chains. Now that we are federally recognized as a Top 50 Principal U.S. Port, we should be able to attract much more investment and interest in our region.”